



Transportation and Environment Committees
Joint Public Hearing, March 11, 2022

RE: SB 4 AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONNECTICUT CLEAN AIR ACT

Senators Haskell and Cohen, Representatives Lemar and Gresko, Ranking members Somers, Miner, Carney and Harding, and distinguished members of the Transportation and Environment Committees, my name is Kyle DeVivo, and I am one of the owners of DATTCO Bus. **I am here today to offer our support for SB4 and the underlying goals and objectives it supports, but also to offer feedback as to how the private bus industry can play a significant part in achieving those goals and the support these companies will need in order to make that a reality.**

As the largest privately-owned passenger transportation provider in Connecticut, we understand the role and responsibility that we have to both our employees and customers to accelerate the electrification of school buses and other vehicles in our fleet. The outcomes of SB4 will have an unprecedented positive impact on the reduction of transportation emissions in the state of Connecticut, but it will take drastic financial burden to achieve them, one that we will need the full legislative support of this committee and others to overcome.

School buses are an appropriate application where the technology likely meets or exceeds the needs of most routes and services, but there is still much to learn yet about the impacts of heavy-duty vehicle electrification at scale. It is not a reason to delay moving forward, but there should be some recognition that certain trips and routes will require range greater than what is feasible or available based on current technology, and contingencies will have to be considered for those applications which make up a small but not insignificant portion of school bus service in the state. Consideration should be given to leave a least a small contingency for these types of trips, perhaps 10% of vehicles, to allow for these services to continue to be provided.

Much of the premise of the electrification of school buses described in this bill is reliant on the availability and abundance of federal funds to make purchasing these vehicles and their associated infrastructure financially feasible. At present, the cost to purchase new electric school buses is approximately 3 - 3.5 times as expensive as a traditionally powered vehicle of similar size and passenger capacity. That does not include costs for charging infrastructure, facility changes, retraining of maintenance employees and drivers, or other costs associated with this transitional period. We estimate that converting all school buses in the state to electric

power and the associated infrastructure will cost somewhere in the range of \$1.2 – 1.5 Billion between now and 2035. It is incredibly important that even with federal funding available, that the state explore options to make this a financially feasible proposition. These incentives will only serve to accelerate these changes and achieve the underlying objectives even sooner.

One other area of concern that we would hope for assistance on is the regulation of the cost of what will be our new fuel source. It is our hope that we would be able to work with public utilities to assess the needs and capabilities of our existing facilities to support the level of power infrastructure that will be required, and that funding would be available to provide those upgrades in power service. Our fuel is currently purchased tax-free by each school district, so consideration will need to be made as to how this will be handled and controlled as a line-item cost given the nature of this legislation is to offer long-term agreements to provide school bus services. I am confident that this can be achieved through collaboration.

RE: H.B. No. 5039 AN ACT CONCERNING MEDIUM AND HEAVY-DUTY VEHICLE EMISSION STANDARDS

Regarding HB 5039 and the adoption of California emissions standards for heavy and medium duty vehicles, I would like to echo and share in some of the concerns that will be raised in testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Bus Association later today. Though school bus and other planned, short mileage applications are ripe for electrification, we are concerned that the available technology in over the road motorcoaches is still very far from meeting the necessities of these types of trips. It should not be lost on this committee that despite being powered by fossil fuels, that buses already conform to significant emissions standards implemented by the EPA. In terms of per passenger emissions, buses are already one of the greenest forms of transportation, and play a major role in reducing the overall consumer use of fossil fuels, reduce traffic and congestion that leads to idling, and already employ technology to further capture and reduce harmful emissions from the vehicle.

In implementing these regulations on medium and heavy duty vehicles, we would ask the committee to consider the differences in our state and California that have yet to be fully accounted for, the most pertinent of which is the climate in which the vehicle must operate. Heating and cooling cause a significant reduction in the ability for these vehicles to travel long distances and adopting these standards would serve to reduce the availability of these services for long-distance travel, pushing consumers back into personal vehicles and drastically increasing overall energy consumption.

In closing, we at DATTCO are eager to be a participant in the future of transportation here in the state and a cleaner tomorrow for its residents. Private school bus and motorcoach operators must have a seat at the table in these conversations, as the overall goal of this legislation is actually two-fold. Yes, electrification and other fossil fuel replacements are a critical step and

require the support and investment of these committees. However, the true objectives are only achieved by changing consumer behavior to utilize the resources derived from the significant strategic investments outlined in SB4, and we must work together above and beyond this important legislation to make that a reality.

Thank you for your consideration.